

What Greenhouse Growers Need to Know About Ministry of the Environment Approvals

When operating a greenhouse in Ontario there are certain legal requirements to ensure the environment is protected. Depending on your greenhouse operation practices, you may need several approvals from the Ministry of the Environment.

The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for protecting the environment by ensuring that Ontario's environmental laws are being followed to minimize or eliminate the potential impacts on the environment. We also provide support to local industry to ensure a consistent understanding of regulatory requirements.

This fact sheet provides greenhouse operators with important information on approvals and permits required by the ministry for greenhouse operations.

What approvals do I need for my greenhouse operation?

The ministry issues permits, licenses and Environmental Compliance Approvals that permit various activities to proceed in compliance with environmental laws.

Section 53 of the Ontario Water Resources Act requires an approval for sewage works that collect, transmit, treat or dispose of sewage. Under the act, "sewage" refers to all types of wastewater, including leachate, stormwater, and sanitary wastewater. Sewage systems are classified as either municipal/private sewage works or industrial sewage works. Wastewater from greenhouses falls under the industrial sewage classification.

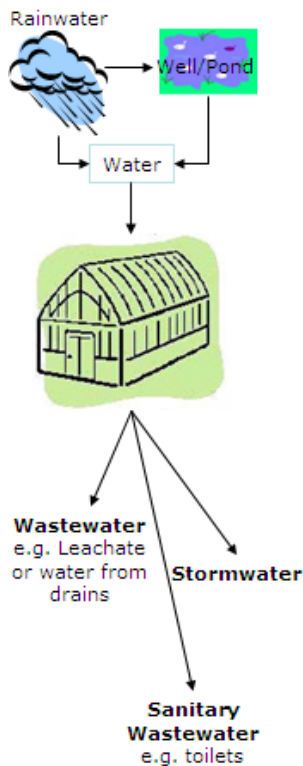
Section 34 of the Ontario Water Resources Act also governs water takings. Anyone taking more than 50,000 litres of water on any given day from a lake, stream, river, pond or groundwater source needs a Permit to Take Water (PTTW).

Prior to applying to your local municipality for permits you are required to have all of the necessary ministry approvals. It is also beneficial to ensure your local conservation authority is aware of your plans. Furthermore, you may wish to contact a qualified consultant or engineer to begin discussion on what technical studies may be required.

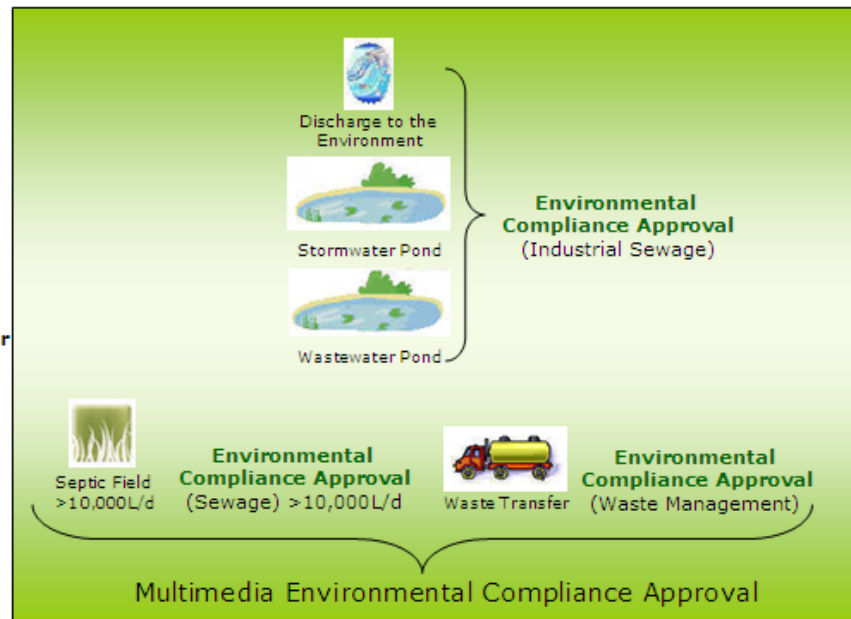
You may also be subject to additional approvals or regulatory requirements for other activities such as:

- Application, storage and disposing of pesticides
- Burning offsite waste (e.g., waste oil)

The diagram on the next page illustrates the approvals commonly required for greenhouse water management under the Ontario Water Resources Act.



Approvals Commonly Required



How do I obtain approvals?

In general, the process for obtaining an Environmental Compliance Approval or a permit involves the following steps:

1. Pre-consultation:
 - You are encouraged to contact your regional Ministry of the Environment office before submitting an application to discuss your planned activities and what approvals you will require. The application requirements will be clarified during the consultation, helping you avoid lengthy delays due to missing or incomplete information. Having your consultant and/or engineer present is also recommended during pre-consultation.
2. Completion of the application form:
 - The application form and any required supporting documents are submitted to the Ministry's Environmental Approvals Access and Service Integration Branch (EAASIB). Application forms and related guidance documents are available online, or may be obtained by contacting your local ministry office.
3. Ministry evaluation:
 - Your application and supporting documents are reviewed by ministry staff from the Area or District office, the Regional office and finally by the Environmental Approvals Access and Service Integration Branch, taking into consideration any environmental impacts. Any concerns are addressed through the review process.

4. Approval issued:
- If your application is approved, an Environmental Compliance Approval, permit or licence is issued.
 - The ministry may visit your greenhouse to inspect the operations included in your Environmental Compliance Approval or permit, if a complaint is received or in the event of a spill.

For information on the ministry's specific approvals and programs, please review the following fact sheets:

- Greenhouses and Permit to Take Water
- Greenhouses and Pesticides
- Greenhouses and Wastewater

Where can I get more information?

Environmental Compliance Approvals:

- http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/industry/assessment_and_approvals/environmental_approvals/index.htm

Permits to Take Water:

- http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/industry/assessment_and_approvals/water_taking/STDPROD_075554

Pesticides:

- <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/land/pesticides/licensing.php>

Or contact one of the offices listed below:

Ministry of the Environment	
Eastern Regional Office (Kingston) Tel: 613-549-4000 or 1-800-267-0974	Northern Regional Office (Thunder Bay) Tel: 807-475-1205 or 1-800-875-7772
Central Region Office (North York) Tel: 416-326-6700 or 1-800-810-8048	Southwestern Regional Office (London) Tel: 519-873-5000 or 1-800-265-7672
West Central Regional Office (Hamilton) Tel: 905-521-7640 or 1-800-668-4557	

This fact sheet is for information purposes. If there is a discrepancy between this fact sheet and the legislation, the legislation prevails.

Aussi disponible en français.